

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 AID-20 DRC-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-10

/152 W

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R 101144Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 126

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 2555

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: COLOMBO NORTH BY-ELECTION

REF COLOMBO A-215, SEPT 13, 1973

1. OPPOSITION UNITED NATIONAL PARTY (UNP) RETAINED COLOMBO NORTH SEAT IN OCT 9 BY ELECTION. UNP CANDIDATE VINCENT PERERA TROUNCED LSSP (LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY) OPPONENT ANANDA PREMASINGHE, POLLING 26,956 VOTES TO 9,818 FOR 17,138 MARGIN OUT OF TOTAL VOTE OF 38,553. THREE INDEPENDENTS GAINED ONLY 1,576 VOTES, VICTORY REPORTEDLY EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS OF OPPOSITION LEADER J R JAYEWARDENE AND REPRESENTS 150 PERCENT INCREASE OVER UNP'S COLOMBO NORTH MARGIN IN 1970. SWING TOWARD UNP CAN BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY NEW VOTERS AND BY 25 PERCENT DEFECTION FROM UF CANDIDATE, LARGEST DROP SO FAR REGISTERED IN SERIES OF BY-ELECTIONS WHICH BEGAN LAST YEAR, FIVE OUT OF SIX OF WHICH UNP HAS WON, FOR NET GAIN OF ONE SEAT.

2. LOPSIDED MARGIN, UNUSUAL EVEN FOR UNP STRONGHOLD SUCH AS COLOMBO NORTH, DOUBTLESS REFLECTS POPULAR DISPLEASURE WITH NEW FOOD AUSTERITY MEASURES INTRODUCED OCT 1, AND MAY MARK ONSET OF SIGNIFICANT UNP INROADS INTO UF MASS BASE.

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CAMPAIGN IN LAST STAGES CENTERED ON UFG HANDLING OF FOOD

CRISIS, AND SUCCESS IN COLOMBO NORTH WILL PROBABLY FURTHER
ENCOURAGE J.R. TO KEEP HITTING ON THIS ISSUE. BY-ELECTION
VICTORY COMES AS PRELUDE TO JOINT OPPOSITION RALLY IN COLOMBO
11 OCT AND "DAY OF MOURNING" DEMONSTRATION PLANNED FOR
OCT 19. UFG LEADERS, INCLUDING PM, HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY
TESTY OVER UNP CRITICISM OF FOOD POLICY, WITH LEFT ESPECIALLY
CONCERNED WITH IMPACT OF UNP ON PUBLIC OPINION. COLOMBO NORTH
RESULTS ARE NOT LIKELY TO DIMINISH THIS CONCERN.
VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

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